

# Postcolonial Dilemma in Laila Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land*

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**Abstract**— In this paper, the researcher shows how Laila Halaby presents mainstream Americans' perception of Arab Americans post 9/11 America in her novel *Once in a Promised Land*. Halaby narrates how the mainstream Americans provided the Western gaze upon the Arab-American citizens. Halaby symbolizes in the characters an America which is conspiratorial and submerged with religious passions. After 9/11, Halaby's mainstream American characters become increasingly fanatical and mistrustful of Arabs, specifically, and Islamic religion, in general. Halaby, then, portrays intolerant and xenophobic American characters overwrought with doubts and discloses a post 9/11 America that is prevalent with anti-Arab racism. Halaby also propounds that the widespread American perception of a world patently divided between East and West only arouses global crises such as drought, poverty and war. She also declares that the attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, were a direct result of these epidemics. Moreover, Halaby offers a perspective of Americans who are ignorantly perceiving the United States as separated from crises affecting all nations. For this reason, Halaby's novel functions as a cautionary tale decreeing Americans to transcend a binary frame of reference to avoid further crises from escalating within or beyond American borders.

**Keywords**— Orientalism, Eastern and Western cultures, Racism, Arab Americans

## I. INTRODUCTION

Many Arab-American authors have published literary works since the attacks in New York on 11 September, 2011. Some of these authors' themes are how Arab Americans struggled to keep their identity in the midst of the anti-Arab hatred. This 11 September event spurred Arab Americans to get out of the invisible world into a "highly visible community that either directly or indirectly affects America's so-called culture wars, foreign policy, presidential elections, and legislative tradition" (Salaita, 2011, p.110). Arab-American authors portray characters trying to come to terms with the complicated nature of both their ambivalent identity and fraught position in the United States, finding themselves alienated from Arab and American cultures alike. The Arab-American characters who cannot blend in into either Eastern or Western cultures are common in many fictional accounts post 9/11 in

America. This text, *Once in a Promised Land*, by Halaby (2007) is undoubtedly applicable to the central theme in the portrayal of Arab-American characters in the novel. Before the 9/11 attacks, Halaby's protagonists, Jassim and Salwa Haddad, are residents in a rich suburb just outside of Tucson, Arizona. After the attacks, Jassim becomes the focus of an unsubstantiated FBI investigation, and Salwa begins to experience longing for her homeland as she feels ostracized by the country in which she was born.

The post-9/11 finds Jassim and Salwa isolated from the lifestyle to which they were once accustomed. Eventually they become estranged from one another and their marriage begins to fall apart. Although the challenges faced by the central characters are pivotal to the plot, Laila Halaby's novel draws more attention to American individuals who react to her Arab-American protagonists rather than the ambivalent identity challenges facing the

protagonists themselves. In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks Halaby's Arab-American characters realize that many Americans have adopted the hostile stance propagated by the discourse of American politicians at the beginning of the war on terror, which aggravated the American misunderstanding and mistrust of Arabic and Islamic immigrants already in America prior to the tumultuous event.

*Once in a Promised Land* is an especially compelling account of post 9/11 attack in America because Halaby projects the American stereotypical picture of Arab countries thus displaying Western extremism and an American society that is full of conspiracy hysteria and religious fundamentalism. Halaby also proposes that the pervasive American perception of a world starkly divided the East and West and only exacerbates global crises such as drought, poverty, and war. According to Halaby, the attacks that took place on September 11, 2001 were a direct result of these worldwide pestilences, which cannot, ultimately, be contained within the Third World. Halaby's novel, therefore, works as a cautionary tale, directing Americans to avoid the binary discourses to avert further crises from spiraling either within or beyond American border. Halaby emphasizes that the U.S. is as susceptible to crises as nations currently perceived as the Third World. She draws attention to class inequalities, environmental disasters, and a troubled population that exist within U.S. and offers to the American public and mainstream media to not overlook and underestimate the epidemics taking place within U.S. own boundary.

Halaby's judgment of the 9/11 attacks as a significant worldwide concern is again proved in her application of techniques and imagery used by Leslie Marmon Silko in her groundbreaking 1977 work, *Ceremony*. Silko merges traditional Native American folklore with contemporary poetry to assert her theme of growing transnational conflict. Similarly, Halaby compares Arabic mythology and Western fairy stories to expose causes of the struggle between Eastern and Western countries that, according to Halaby, are imperceptible to many Americans and Arabs alike. Halaby focuses much of her novel on the growing universal water unavailability, concentrating on regions in the Middle East and the southwestern United States. Her implication that the potential for worldwide disasters unites all universal inhabitants in a common fate is a recollection of Silko's warning that the possibility of nuclear extermination affects all cultures irrespective of location.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many scholars influenced by Edward Said's seminal text, *Orientalism* have continued to probe and develop the study under the postcolonial theoretical approach. Orientalism as a discourse function as an example of the postcolonial predicament of Asians and Westerners alike. In Western scholarly work the West has been either implicitly or explicitly, but nevertheless often rather uncritically, accepted into a dichotomous relationship with "the Rest." The Western imagery of the Orient has been required to make the image of the Occident possible, and it has produced a discourse that has evolved into a kind of imagined binary ontology. This ontology has remained surprisingly strong, although at the same time it has become more obvious that the "two parts" are less distinguishable because of reasons such as globalization and its interconnecting phenomena of large labor movements, global markets, ethnic tensions, diseases, the mass media and so forth (James, 1992).

As previously mentioned, there is also a direct connection between Laila Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land* and Leslie Marmon Silko's 1977 work, *Ceremony*. Both Halaby and Silko texture traditional stories with their own narratives. In addition, Halaby's conclusion that universal disasters unite all citizens worldwide in a common fate is reminiscent of Silko's cautionary tale that the likelihood of nuclear annihilation affects all cultures, regardless of position. Consequently, both authors encourage cooperation between the East and the West states and state that it is essential for all civilizations to transcend countrywide boundaries and cultural partitions in order to solve universal crises.

Abdallah (2016) conducted a comparative study on the portrayal of the Arab-Muslim character in Laila Halaby *Once in a Promised Land*. He claims that it clarifies and explains the issues being examined from varying perceptions, through numerous cultural perceptions, endeavoring to mark the "demarcation between the discourse which spreads stereotypical images of Arab Americans, and the alternative which illustrates the inherent human principles of the portrayed characters" (p.2). Consequently, the writer utilizes Orientalism as the lens in the analysis of the aforementioned novel analysed from the Arab and Western perspectives.

Laila Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land*, as a diverse of secession politics, is major to her work. In the novel, whereas some of her Arab-American character's practice Arab culture and conventions, Jassim and Salwa are infrequently portrayed as doing so. They are, in fact, enthusiastic contributors to the American consumer culture, and their home is representative of a prosperous American

couple having achieved the American dream, lacking almost any indication that they once exist in another part of the world as the description of the setting below indicates:

That afternoon, driving up recently repaved asphalt to his nestled-in-the hills home, Jassim pulled up his glinty Mercedes next to one of many identical expectant mailboxes, each painted a muted rusty brown ... in the coolness of his house, Jassim removed a gleaming glass from a glossy maple cabinet and filled it with the purest spring water money could buy ... [h]e pulled the trashcan out from under the right side of the sink (the spot where 92 percent of Americans keep their kitchen trashcans, he remembered hearing somewhere, though he doubted the statistic) so that he could reach the recycling basket, into which he deposited a handful of direct mail and ads (except for Salwa's overpriced-underwear-catalogue ...) Salwa's two magazines (one ... with a photograph of someone's pristine white living room) found themselves on top of the underwear catalogue. (Halaby, 2009: p.23-24)

Halaby places her novel on both sides of the critical discussion outlined by El Said and Aboul-Ela. She depicts some Arab-American characters exercising Arabic conventions and customs, yet in some segments of text, Halaby portrays Jassim and Salwa as culturally non-practicing compared to her other Arab-American characters. Halaby refers to this as their endeavoring to achieve the American dream and to be as American as possible. Halaby portrays Salwa's friend, Randa, for instance, as more satisfied with her existence in America than Salwa because of her devotion to Arabic culture and customs which Salwa does not practice. When Salwa's marriage starts to disintegrate, she feels homesick and endeavors to find solace in Randa's companionship. As Randa prepares Arabic coffee for the two women she feels that she is flying "across the continental United States, stretched her arm across the Atlantic until she found Beirut,

and ... the coffee boiled away thousands of miles of homesickness. (pp. 283-4)

Banita (2012) infers that both characters, Jassim and Salwa, are faced by "citizens spurred by Bush's invitation to work as the spies of USA government" and emphasises that Halaby's intention is to cast Arab Americans as "one step behind other social outsiders" in the eyes of the Americans they encounter (p. 246). Tancke (2009) in his article "Uses and Abuses of Trauma in Post-9/11 Fiction a Contemporary Culture," suggests that Salwa and Jassim bear the shock of the 9/11 attacks. However, he fails to consider the American racism that directly resulted from the attacks and its impact on their lives. As Banita (2012) states:

It is not the repercussions from 9/11 as such that causes Salwa and Jassim's life to disintegrate. ... *Once in a Promised Land* critically and self-consciously explores the contemporary fascination with trauma: we tend to sweepingly apply ubiquitous and simplistic categories such as "9/11," while the traumatizing potential of violence and guilt inherent in human relationships are impossible to predict. (Banita, 2012)

Gikandi (2005) presents a didactic view to Halaby's work. In his essay "Globalization and the Claims of Post-coloniality," he refers to the tendency of colonized countries to come back to other time frames to re-formulate their history from an opinion which precedes the reach of the colonizers (p. 615). So, colonized countries create a few local histories that depict their community in a style that "the West would not discriminate them" (p. 615). Colonized countries can re-establish their true identity and refuse the identity that the colonizer has coerced upon them. (Simon, 2005)

Both aspects of the critical writing relating to Arab- American writers in a post 9/11 timeframe makes Gikandi's theory especially pertinent to Laila Halaby's novel which is situated between the two arguments. El Said (2008) proposes that Arab American authors almost always concentrate their interest on affairs of family life to keep their hybrid identities and Self (p. 201). Aboul-Ela (2008), however, refutes the view of El Said. This can also be considered as an application for Gikandi's theory to Arab-American writers, alternatively requiring Arab-American

writers to create "little histories" to regain their identity which is forced upon them by colonizing nations.

### III. CRITICAL DISCUSSIONS

Despite little published criticism of Halaby's novel to date of this day, an analysis of her novel *Once in a Promised Land* is especially germane to the critical writer surrounding post 9/11 Arab-American literature. Many scholars suggested that the events caused writers such as Evelyn Alsultany, Nadine Naber, and Steven Salaita (2007), to feel that those who were once perhaps the most invisible members of U.S. society, has fallen into the realm of "hypervisibility." Naber points out, nonetheless, that in the months following the attacks, in spite of the "hypervisibility" that Arab Americans encountered, the starting of state-sponsored attacks against Arab Americans, such as the "PATRIOT Act, special registration, and FBI investigations" received little attention (Naber, 2000, p. 23).

Instead, most mass media outlets concentrated their coverage on "individual hate crimes that took place in the public sphere while downplaying attacks against those targeted by state violence at detention centers, airports, immigration and naturalization service centers, and the workplace" (Arab Americans 3, 2). The traditional U.S. media overlooked the reality that Arab Americans who hadn't have any relationship with the attacks were under attack themselves. Halaby's novel pays specific consideration to the very examples of state-sponsored violence that Naber (2008) mentions. She opens her novel with a scene exposing the treatment of Arab Americans at U.S. airports, as one of her central characters, Jassim, becomes the suspect of an FBI investigation due to unconfirmed suspicion over his work as a hydrologist.

Most critics relate Arab American literature in a post- 9/11 milieu to the build off of Edward Said's seminal 1978 work, *Orientalism*. For example, Maha El Said, in her article "The Face of the Enemy: Arab-American Writing Post- 9/11," points to the fact that, since 9/11 "Arab-Americans, who are a *mélange* of Arab and American, become trapped in an attempt to redefine their identity, and reconstruct a hybridity that seems impossible in a world that is divided into 'we' and 'them' (El Said ,2008. p.201). While Maha El Said concentrates on Arab American poets attempting to represent their identity on their own terms, her description of Arab Americans can also be applied to Halaby's protagonists, Jassim and Salwa Haddad. Naber (2008) and Salaita (2011) rightly propose that Arab Americans were inseparable members of the American society before the attacks. So, the characters Jassim and Salwa are able to keep an identity that is both Arab and American through this timeframe with ease. By comparison

their less financially successful Arab Americans who are initially invisible to even Jassim and Salwa, are suggested by Halaby to be able to maintain cultural hybridity is directly related to class structures. On the one hand, they sometimes cook distinct foods from their homeland and establish friendships with other Arab American families. On the other hand, they eagerly adopt the American lifestyles by engaging in American consumer culture of surrounding themselves with luxuries such as expensive cars, silk pajamas and towels larger than sheets. Nevertheless, after the 9/11 attacks, Jassim and Salwa find it increasingly difficult to be assimilated into the American mainstream society. Their Arab-American identity becomes all the more tenuous as their interactions with other Americans become progressively more strained.

Whereas El Said emphasises on the issue of Arab American identity in post-9/11, Hosam Aboul-Ela calls for Arab American novelists to suggest an openly political response to anti-Arab discrimination. In his article "Edward Said's Out of Place: Criticism, Polemic, and Arab American Identity," Aboul-Ela notes, "The post-September 11 moment in Arab-American history has seen an acceleration of interest in [a] 'multicultural' view of Arabs in the United States" one that "treat[s] the Arab American experience as a set of specific anthropological details related to cuisine, courtship, religion, language, and various social practices" (Aboul-Ela, 2008, p.16). Aboul-Ela believes that this attitude is possibly hindering, and therefore argues that "a dissident relationship to United States foreign policy in the Middle East is foundational to the experience of many Arab Americans and to a potential sense of Arab American community" (p.15). Aboul-Ela (2008) maintains that Arab American literature since 9/11 is often written from a "multicultural" and sometimes counterproductive perspective.

Aboul-Ela's representation could be applied to Halaby's novel as a diversity of dissident politics is central to her work. Furthermore, while some of her Arab-American characters practice Arab traditions and cultures, Jassim and Salwa are seldom depicted as doing so. They are avid participants in American consumer culture, and their home is typical of a wealthy American couple, lacking almost any indication that they once resided in another part of the world. Although Salwa and Jassim are theist consumers, one still might expect them to preserve their dedication to Islam. However, they seldom practice their religious obligations. Jassim, in fact, is depicted as not mainly spiritual.

Laila Halaby portrays some Arab-American characters as being involved in Arabic traditions. However, she depicts Jassim and Salwa as nearly de-cultured



compared to other Arab-American characters. Laila Halaby indicates that the alienation Jassim and Salwa experience after the attacks is heightened because of their pursuance of an American way of life and the quest of the American dream. Halaby imagines Salwa's friend, Randa, for example, as more content with her life in America more than Salwa due to her devotion to Arabic customs which Salwa does not practice. When Salwa's marriage begins to untangle she becomes nostalgic of her homeland and seeks solace in Randa's company.

As well as offering a unique contiguity of Arab-American characters' commitment to habits with her protagonists who are less traditional, Laila Halaby also engages in the political oration that Aboul-Ela questions. For example, she portrays short-sighted American characters laying flags on their cars alternatively coming to a comprehending of the actual crisis at hand. One of Salwa's colleagues in the work even offers her an American flag marker in an effort to face the racism she is sure Salwa is bound to face. As she says, "You should put one on your car, on the back window. You never know what people are thinking, and having this will let them know where you stand"(p. 55):

Each time the president spoke about the War on Terror  
[Penny] was  
outraged, sickened that there were people so sinister that  
they would want  
to harm innocent Americans ... As the president said,  
Americans were  
bringing democracy to places that knew only tyranny and  
terror, that  
didn't have freedom to choose. (Halaby, 2009, p. 280)

Whereas Halaby's Arab-American characters are not openly political Halaby's novel itself is acutely political. By depicting the recurrence of American characters' xenophobic and split oration put forward by U.S. media outlets and politicians, Halaby is practicing an objection to American foreign politics that Aboul-Ela calls for.

Although the George Bush administration and American mass media were not exclusively in charge of racializing the post-9/11 moment, Laila Halaby deliberates on these two particular channels of communication in her novel. In her article "Race, Risk, and Fiction in the War on Terror: Laila Halaby, Gayle Brandeis, and Michael Cunningham," Banita (2012) examines what she refers to as the "second wave" of post-9/11 literature where authors choose to concentrate on the implications of the war on terror rather than on the days directly following the attacks. As Banita (2012) explains:

The division of the world into good and evil as proposed  
by the Bush  
administration in the days leading up to the invasion of  
Afghanistan and  
the start of the war on terror culminated in what may be  
called moral  
racialization, that is, the articulation of a racially  
suspicious enemy figure  
propagated through the visual media and intended to  
imbibe and redirect  
as much public resentment as possible. (p: 245)

Banita presumes that Jassim and Salwa are confronted by "citizens galvanized by Bush's call to act as the eyes and ears of the government" and emphasizes that Halaby's intent is to cast Arab Americans as "one step behind other social outsiders" in the eyes of the Americans they encounter (p. 246). In the article "Uses and Abuses of Trauma in Post-9/11 Fiction a Contemporary Culture," Ulrike Tancke suggests that the upheaval Salwa and Jassim afford has little to do with 9/11. Nevertheless, he neglects to consider the state-sponsored racism that directly resulted from the attacks and its effect on their lives. As Tancke (2010) states:

It is not the repercussions from 9/11 as such that causes  
Salwa and  
Jassim's life to disintegrate. The traumatizing events in  
the novel are the  
result of coincidence and only vaguely connected events,  
and of the  
propensity of human beings to ... inflict pain on each  
other. Hence, Once  
in a Promised Land critically and self-consciously  
explores the  
contemporary fascination with trauma: we tend to  
sweepingly apply  
ubiquitous and simplistic categories such as "9/11," while  
the traumatizing  
potential of violence and guilt inherent in human  
relationships are impossible to predict. (p: 85)

Whereas Tancke is right to point out that the 9/11 attacks should not be considered as the motivation for all of Salwa and Jassim's marital problems, there is much evidence in the novel to refer that the events following 9/11 contribute to their divided relationship. Tancke overlooks the suffering the two characters directly encounter resulting from the post 9/11 American impression of Arabic culture propagated by the government-sponsored racism. After all, Laila Halaby opens her novel with the observation that "Salwa and Jassim

are both Arabs. Both Muslims. But of course, they have nothing to do with what happened to the World Trade Center. Nothing and everything" (Tancke ,2010. p: viii). Banita would also argue with Tancke 's position, "Certainly the attacks have a powerful impact on the couple's lives" (Tancke ,2010. p:246).

Salwa and Jassim's meeting after the attacks become increasingly intolerant and distrustful. Even the American characters, which Laila Halaby portrays as initially accepting and open-minded earlier in the novel begin to either distrust Jassim and Salwa or engage in anti-Arab racism as a result of the actions of the American government. For instance, Jassim's boss, Marcus, who at first defends his friend of fifteen years at the onset of an FBI investigation, starts to question Jassim's innocence through a conversation with his wife:

Something had been different in Jassim lately, something Jassim was not talking to him about. It could be anything, he had told himself over and over. It could be medical, or something in his marriage ... Not for the first time, his wife had brought to the surface the very thing that was nagging at him, harvested that vague doubt that had been lodged way back in his brain, undercutting the faith he had in others. (Halaby, 2007.p.237)

Marcus's distrust of Jassim grows after he learns of the FBI investigation, and Jassim's otherness subsequently becomes all the clearer to him.

Moreover, after the attacks one of the employees at the mall named Amber, who is a sales clerk at the mall, follows Jassim and calls a security guard on him. Salwa appears angry at Amber and she said: "Excuse me, young lady ... Why did you call that security guard on my husband?" (p. 29). Amber answers, "He just scared me ... He just stood there and stared for a really long time, like he was high or something. And then I remembered all the stuff that's been going on" (p:30). When Mandy, Amber's manager, asks Amber about the actions and he said: "You told us to report anything suspicious, and I just thought he looked suspicious" (p.31). Amber's misplaced distrust is based simply on Jassim's non- Western appearance, and for the first time since the attacks, Salwa comes into contact with anti-Arab racism meted out in the form of suspicion.

Other American characters in the novel are only able to see Jassim and Salwa as non-Western others even before the events of 9/11. Jack Franks, for example, reveals his

crushing ignorance of Islamic culture shortly before the attacks occur. Jack meets Jassim at the fitness center, and is distrustful of him instantly solely based upon his appearance. When Jack begins to probe into Jassim's background, Jassim discloses that he is from Jordan, to which Jack responds, "I went to Jordan once ... followed my daughter there. She married a Jordanian. Not one like you, though. This one was from the sticks—or the sand, as the case was ... [s]he's converted. She's an Arab now" (p.6).

Unlike Jack and Marcus, Penny has faith in Jassim, but Laila Halaby finds out that Penny does not extend the same sympathy to Arabic cultures as a whole. Through a conversation she has with her mate, Penny reveals the firm reaction to Arabs she forms after the attacks on the World Trade Center, "Jassim is a good guy, he's not like them, shouldn't be judged like them. But those people over there, they oppress women and kill each other. They're the ones who should be bombed" (Halaby, 2009. p:281). Laila Halaby narrates that Penny does not include Jassim in her sweeping classification of "them" because of his wealth. By depicting American characters using such racially charged language, Laila Halaby, instead of focusing wholly on the integration struggles of her Arab American characters, also chooses to portray Americans viewing the world from an 'us' versus 'them' mentality. This binary divides both the East from the West and rich from poor alike. Laila Halaby's point is that, unless Americans are able to consider themselves as universal citizens, Eastern and Western cultures will remain isolated and estranged, perpetuating the current crises of drought, poverty, and war occurring in all corners of the globe.

Given the attention Laila Halaby pays in pestilences all over the world as well as Edward Said's *Orientalism* and postcolonialism in general, it is particularly valuable to apply globalization theory to Halaby's novel. Simon Gikandi (2005) offers a perspective instructive in particular to Halaby's work. In his article "Globalization and the Claims of Post-coloniality," Gikandi points to the tendency of colonized countries to revert to other timeframes in order to refashion their history from a point of view that preceded the arrival of the occupation, so colonized countries create "little" or "local" histories that portray their society in a way that the West would not mark them (p:615). Colonized nations are then able to both re-establish their true identity and reject the identity that the colonizer has forced upon them.

Parties of both the critical debate on the role of Arab-American authors in a period after 9/11 adhere to Gikandi's position. This position causes Gikandi's theory particularly pertinent to *Once in a Promised Land*, a novel

of Halaby that is situated between the two arguments. El Said (2008), on the one hand, proposes that Arab-American writers often focus their attention on affairs of family and domesticity to maintain their ambivalent identities and sense of "Self" (p. 201). Aboul-Ela, while seeming to disagree with El Said, can also be viewed as applying Gikandi's theory to Arab-American authors. Instead of requesting Arab-American authors to create "little histories" to restore an accurate identity that has not been imposed upon them by colonizing nations, he asks them to engage in dissent in order to participate in and reconnect with a shared identity, thus separating themselves from an often-overwhelming Western culture (Aboul-Ela, 2008, p.15).

The opening scene of Halaby's novel lays the foundation to the theme of the novel. This scene is in a Washington airport when an Arab-American passenger is put under the questioned. The airport security guard asks the passenger to place personal possessions in a recycle bin. Instead of responding to the security guard's information and questions, the passenger takes on the role of a narrator, asking readers of the story that is about to follow to place preconceptions into a small box:

And for good measure, why don't you throw in those  
hateful names as  
well, ones you might never even utter: Sand Nigger, Rag  
Head, and  
Camel Jockey. You don't need them for this story, and you  
might find  
they get in the way, like a small child who's just had a  
candy bar and a can  
soda and has to attend a funeral ... I don't need to lock the  
box, for it  
has a power of its own and will stay closed for the duration  
of our story?  
Do you feel lighter now, relieved of your excess baggage?  
(Halaby, 2009)

The narrator is given the perspective of the novel's security guard and he asked the readers to apply any stereotypes into the box before their journey. During this detour, Halaby deploys yet another reflection and sets the tone for the rest of her narrative.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Halaby's novel *Once in a Promised Land* remains as relevant as it did when it was first published in 2007, eleven years after the events of September 11, 2001. The significance is due not only to Halaby's not shying away from broaching controversial subjects, but also to the cruelty of American bigotry and prejudice. Halaby's novel

is different from other literary works by Arab-American authors which follows 9/11 due to her ability to link the attacks to a theme of persistent global crises through the war on terror and discourses surrounding it. However, Halaby's accusation of American biasness seems to stand the test of time. For instance, the reaction to the "ground-zero mosque" stands as a witness to the fact that many Americans still see all Arabs and Muslims as "the enemy". Also, Pastor Terry Jones's intention to burn the Koran on the anniversary of 9/11 and the recent Koran burning carried out by U.S. troops in Afghanistan serve as further proof of American Islamophobia. All these tendencies of some Americans to fear all Middle Eastern peoples because of the acts of a few extremists proves that the American misplaced reaction to terrorism is not likely to change in the immediate future. And this will be further evidence of the lack of change in American sentiment toward Arab Americans.

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